

# BLABY DISTRICT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



## Core Strategy Alternative Options

November 2008

**Blaby District Council**  
**Local Development Framework – Core Strategy (Alternative Options)**  
**November 2008**

**1.0 Background**

- 1.1 Blaby District Council is producing a Local Development Framework (LDF) that will set out the Spatial Plan for the District up to 2026. A key part of the LDF is the Core Strategy (CS) which sets out the vision, strategic objectives, spatial strategy, and core policies that will shape the District in the future. All subsequent parts of the LDF, including Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) must be in accordance with it.
- 1.2 This paper considers **Alternative Options (AO)** for a number of key Spatial Planning matters. It replaces the Core Strategy (Preferred Options) identified in the Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS) (March 2007), which will not be pursued following changes to Planning Guidance and legislation. The AO paper builds on consultation responses from a first draft Core Strategy (Issues and Options and Preferred Options) that took place in November 2005 and May 2006 respectively, and ongoing Issues and Options consultation (including an Issues and options paper in March 2008). These consultation documents can be found on the Council's website ([www.blaby.gov.uk](http://www.blaby.gov.uk)). The purpose of this document is primarily to seek views on Alternative Options in order to guide the policy approach that is considered most appropriate for the District.
- 1.3 **At this stage none of the Alternative Options represents the policy of this Council.** The paper is fundamentally different to previous Core Strategy consultation documents in that it identifies specific strategic sites that are being considered to accommodate growth (primarily housing and employment).
- 1.4 The document will help to inform development of a Submission version of the Core Strategy which will be submitted to the Secretary of State in 2009. This will be the subject of an Independent Examination. The Submission version of the document will set out a spatial portrait, vision, objectives and strategy for the plan area and a series of 'preferred policies and allocations'.

**2.0 Key issues arising from the Proposed Changes to the Regional Plan**

- 2.1 The document has been prepared in the context of the East Midlands Regional Plan, also known as the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), which was the subject of an Examination during the summer of 2007. The Panel report into the RSS was received in November 2007 with Proposed Changes being issued by the Secretary of State in July 2008. The Proposed Changes have identified a number of key issues that will affect the District of Blaby, including the quantity, phasing and broad

location of further housing 'growth'. The Proposed Changes to the Regional Plan for the East Midlands require 8,650 homes to be built in the District of Blaby by 2026 (including affordable housing). The Proposed Changes suggest the following phased approach to housing provision. Between 2006 – 2011 260 houses per year, between 2011 – 2016 340 houses per year, and between 2016 – 2026 460 houses per year.

- 2.2 The Proposed Changes also suggest that a 'mini review' of the RSS will be required following completion of the emerging plan in order to accommodate revised household projections. This mini review may result in a further increase in housing requirements above the currently proposed figure. Whilst the RSS does not give any quantitative steer on the need for employment land, it does encourage Local Planning Authorities to meet the employment needs of their areas.
- 2.3 In addition to meeting the housing needs of new and existing residents, the Core Strategy will be expected to consider the local economy and the need for new jobs.
- 2.4 The RSS encourages a policy of urban concentration which requires most of the growth to be in and around the Principal Urban Areas (PUA) including the parts of Blaby District that are close to Leicester. The PUA is shown in Appendix C.
- 2.5 The Proposed Changes also confirm the need for a Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) "to the west of Leicester in Blaby". The Proposed Changes remove the locational specificity of the SUE proposed in the Draft RSS, and also removes reference to the scale of any SUE – these are matters to be determined by the Local Planning Authority.

### **3.0 RSS implications for Alternative Options**

- 3.1 In light of the Proposed Changes, a number of options are addressed in this document, namely:
  - o The potential locations of strategic scale new development (including Sustainable Urban Extensions and Strategic Employment Sites);
  - o The role of settlements within the District in the form of a settlement hierarchy;
  - o Green Wedges;
  - o Climate Change policies, and:
  - o The role and function of the Motorways Retail Area (MRA)
- 3.2 The 'Spatial Portrait' (a description of the key characteristics of the District in terms of its environment, population and economy), Spatial

Strategy and Strategic Objectives have been included in previous drafts of the document and are not repeated. Notwithstanding this, any comments concerning these and other aspects of the previous Core Strategy drafts are welcome. Copies of previous stages of the Core Strategy are available on the Council's web-site [www.blaby.gov.uk](http://www.blaby.gov.uk).

#### **4.0 Relationship of the Core Strategy with other documents**

4.1 The Core Strategy provides an opportunity to deliver some of the goals of the Sustainable Community Strategy and will aim to improve the quality of life of people whilst balancing a need to protect the environment and improve the local economy. In addition, it will provide a link with other important plans and strategies.

#### **5.0 The evidence base**

5.1 In order to inform the policies and proposals of the Core Strategy, the Council continues to assemble a robust, transparent and comprehensive evidence base. The key areas of evidence which underpin the Alternative Options will be made available on the Council's web-site as they emerge. Further evidence will continue to be gathered as part of the consideration of Alternative Options. Key areas that require further work include the impact of the Options on: transportation; 'infrastructure' (the facilities and services that support communities); and Green Infrastructure (GI).

#### **6.0 How to respond to this document**

6.1 Comments are invited on this consultation document and will be considered along with representations made concerning previous drafts of the Core Strategy (which do not need to be repeated). These comments will help to inform the submission version of the Core Strategy which is the next key stage.

6.2 Responses can be made by the following means:

- 1) Electronically by using the form available on the Council's web-site [www.blaby.gov.uk](http://www.blaby.gov.uk)

The Council **STRONGLY ENCOURAGES** the submission of comments using the electronic form available on the Council's web-site. This method of submission speeds up the process and is more sustainable because it does not use paper – it is also free.

Responses can also be made:

- 2) By sending an email to [planning.policy@blaby.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@blaby.gov.uk), or
- 3) By letter addressed to: **Planning Policy Section, Council Offices, Desford Road, Narborough, LE19 2EP.**

## **7.0 Next Stages**

7.1 The programme for the preparation of the Local Development Framework set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS) will not be achieved. The revised timescales for production will be updated on a real time basis on the Council's web-site. The likely timescales for production of the Core Strategy are:

- Core Strategy submission version (Summer 2009),
- Examination (Spring 2010).
- Adoption (winter 2010).

## **8.0 How this AO Paper is organised**

8.1 This paper identifies a series of key matters that form a central part of the delivery of the Council's Spatial Strategy. For most of the matters addressed, a series of Alternative Options are identified. The paper briefly outlines some background to the Options considered and the evidence base that has been used to inform the choice of Options. In some cases, the evidence that will be required to fully assess the alternatives identified has not yet been completed and will be gathered as part of the consultation process.

## **9.0 Options identified**

9.1 The potential options have been informed by:

- The emerging RSS;
- Sustainability Appraisals of previous Issues & Options and Preferred Options consultations;
- Planning Policy Statement (PPS) requirements; and
- Other issues emerging through previous consultation and engagement with stakeholders.

9.2 Some issues (at the end of the paper) do not contain alternative options, they do however, identify some of the key issues that will need to be addressed in the Submission Version of the Core Strategy where evidence gathering is ongoing.

## **10.0 Alternative Options for the Location of Sustainable Urban Extension(s)**

- 10.1 The Proposed Changes to the East Midlands Regional Plan identify that some 8,650 new homes need to be provided in the District of Blaby in the period 2001 - 2026. In addition it requires at least 5,720 of these dwellings to be provided in and adjacent to the Principal Urban Area (PUA), which includes the settlements of Glenfield, Leicester Forest East, Kirby Muxloe, Braunstone Town and Glen Parva. The Secretary of State suggests that 'Sustainable Urban Extensions' (SUE) as necessary, should be provided 'west of Leicester within Blaby District' adjacent to the 'Principal Urban Area' (PUA) of Leicester. Given the limited 'Urban Capacity' and other opportunities within the built up area it is likely that the majority of housing will be accommodated within the Sustainable Urban Extension(s).
- 10.2 In addition to housing provision, it is anticipated that the SUE will accommodate the necessary infrastructure to support the increased growth in population. Green Infrastructure, Education, Health and Employment facilities, and improvements to the transport network amongst others will be required. These will be assessed as part of the Alternative Options.
- 10.3 The size and location of the SUE(s) have not been prescribed in the Proposed Changes to the RSS, these are matters to be determined by the Local Planning Authority through the Core Strategy. Taking account of completions since 2001, outstanding permissions, Urban Capacity and large / small site allowances, it is clear that in order to meet the overall requirements of the emerging RSS some **4,000 additional dwellings** will need to be delivered to meet the PUA target identified. It is also possible that the level of housing required in the District may increase in subsequent versions of RSS (to reflect updated household projections).
- 10.4 The Options identified on Map 1 (Appendix A) show three locations promoted by developers / landowners as potential locations for SUEs. The Council is seeking views on which of these Alternative Options either in whole, or in part is most appropriate to deliver a SUE in the District. Further options would be a combination of more than one of these options, or alternative locations for a SUE – the Council is aware of a potential SUE within the Charnwood Borough (adjacent to Glenfield), a small part of which falls within the District of Blaby.
- 10.5 Evidence gathered as part of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment has indicated that these sites have willing developers. The transport and wider infrastructure implications of each of the options will be assessed as part of the Alternative Options process and will help to inform the submission version where the preferred option(s) will be identified. A further opportunity to make representations will be available at that time. Please note, that because of the requirements of the emerging RSS, not providing a SUE is not considered by the Council to be a realistic option.
- 10.6 The Alternative Options for SUE locations are set out below:

## Options:

### 1. Should the SUE be provided at:

- **Site A (90 hectares) (Please give a justification)**
- **Site B (170 hectares / 3,500 homes) (Please give a justification)**
- **Site C (430 hectares / up to 5,000 homes) (Please give a justification)**
- **A combination of more than one site (Please specify which sites and give a justification)**
- **An alternative site that has not been identified (Please specify where and give a justification)**
- **A number of locations adjacent to the PUA.**

## **11.0 Alternative Options for the Location of Strategic Employment Sites**

- 11.1 The Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Employment Land and Premises Study (ELPS) (2008) and the District of Blaby Employment Land and Premises Study (2006) identify that additional employment land is needed in the District of Blaby to meet demand. Both studies broadly support provision of a Strategic Employment Site (of some 25 hectares). In the context of the RSS it is clear that the SES should have a strong functional relationship with the PUA and SUE. In order to be attractive to potential employers sites that have good connections into the existing transport network and can tap into local labour market have been identified.
- 11.2 The detailed size and location of the SESs have not been addressed in the Proposed Changes to the RSS. The Council has therefore based the quantitative needs and qualitative requirements on the ELPS. It is recognised that office, industrial and warehousing use class employment requirements are changable. It is important that employment land requirements should be the subject of regular monitoring. Detailed prescription of total employment land requirements are unlikely to be accurate towards the end of the plan period (2026). The level of employment land required in the District may therefore increase or decrease over this time.
- 11.3 The options for SESs are identified on Map 2 (Appendix B). These show three locations promoted by developers / landowners as potential locations for SESs. It is acknowledged that one of these sites also forms a potential location for a SUE. **The Council is seeking views on which of these Alternative Options is most appropriate to deliver an SES in the District.** Other sites may emerge as part of the consultation process and these will be considered prior to submission.

11.4 Evidence gathered through previous rounds of CS consultation has indicated that these sites have willing developers. The transport and wider infrastructure implications of each of the options will be assessed as part of the Alternative Options process and will help to inform the Submission version where the Council's preferred option(s) will be identified. A further opportunity to make representations will be available at that time.

11.5 The Alternative Options for SES locations are set out below:

**Options:**

**2. Should the SES be provided at:**

- **Site A (90 hectares) (Please give a justification)**
- **Site B (20 hectares) (Please give a justification)**
- **Site C (25 hectares) (Please give a justification)**
- **An alternative site that has not been identified (Please specify where and give a justification).**

**12.0 Alternative Options for Settlement Hierarchy**

12.1 The RSS Proposed Changes indicate that some 2,900 houses will need to be delivered outside of the PUA during the plan period. In order to accommodate these housing requirements, (and other development including employment, shopping and leisure facilities) development will be needed in some of the settlements outside of the PUA. The evidence gathered indicates that not all development needs could be accommodated on previously developed land, or within the existing settlement boundaries identified in the Blaby District Local Plan.

12.2 In order for new development to be guided to the most appropriate locations, it is important for the Core Strategy to establish a hierarchy of settlements. The settlements at the top of the hierarchy are those considered most capable of accommodating additional growth, because of their proximity to, or availability of key services and facilities (including transport services to higher order settlements' facilities and services). This approach does not preclude small scale development within the established settlement boundaries of existing villages but would not support large scale growth outside of the defined settlement boundaries in small and very small villages.

12.3 Described below are 7 levels in the proposed hierarchy with a broad indication in bold type of the scale and form of development that may be acceptable. Table 1 sets out the 7 levels of the hierarchy and identifies the settlements within each:

- Settlements that are within and adjoining the PUA are considered highest in the hierarchy. This is consistent with the strategic approach of 'Urban Concentration' promoted in the emerging RSS. **It is anticipated that the majority of housing, employment and other development would be located in or adjacent to the PUA with which it would have a strong functional relationship.**
- Blaby is considered second in the order as it provides the only 'town centre within the District and offers a broad range of retail and other facilities. **It is therefore a settlement where additional residential development and other supporting infrastructure and facilities is considered appropriate.** Land adjacent to Earl Shilton is considered to be equal with Blaby in the hierarchy. Whilst Earl Shilton falls within the administrative area of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough, the District of Blaby boundary abuts the town within the limits of the recently constructed Earl Shilton by-pass. Earl Shilton is considered part of the Urban Core of Hinckley in the RSS. **It is therefore a settlement where residential development is appropriate.** This will involve close working with the Borough Council.
- Narborough / Littlethorpe, Enderby, Whetstone and Countesthorpe are the largest settlements outside of the PUA. Whilst they have their own strong identity, they all contain a range of services and facilities which could be developed to support further growth. They also have a strong functional relationship with the City of Leicester. Development in these areas would need to balance development needs against the necessity to avoid coalescence of settlements and retaining the identity of individual villages. However, **housing (and other) growth will be appropriate where: it does not undermine the character of the settlement; result in coalescence, or; there would be insufficient infrastructure (existing or new) to support the proposed level of growth.**
- The village of Stoney Stanton is the largest of the settlements in the South of the District. It has a functional relationship with Hinckley and provides a greater range of services and facilities than its neighbours of Sapcote, Sharnford and Aston Flamville. The RSS Proposed changes allow for the "development needs of.....rural areas" provided that the "distinctive character and vitality of rural communities" is maintained. Previous stages of the CS have sought views as to whether Stoney Stanton would be a suitable 'Rural Centre' where additional growth would be acceptable. **Any development would have to be of a scale that respects the character of the village and is capable of being developed without putting unacceptable pressure on existing or new facilities and infrastructure.**
- The villages of Sapcote, Croft, Huncote and Cosby are medium size villages between 1,500 and 4,000 in population. They have a limited range of facilities and services and are more remote from the higher order centre of Leicester. The settlements have some retail and

employment facilities. **Growth outside of established settlement boundaries would not normally be allowed in these settlements where it would be detrimental to the character and built form of the village and where there is inadequate infrastructure to support it, although they may have potential to accommodate larger schemes on brownfield sites within and adjacent to the settlement boundaries. Croft, Sapcote and Huncote are below 3,000 in population and may be suitable locations for Rural Exceptions housing (affordable houses for local people outside of a settlement boundary where a local need is demonstrated).**

- The villages of Elmesthorpe, Kilby, Sharnford and Thurlaston are small villages with a limited range of basic facilities. Large scale growth (10 houses and above) would not be directed to these settlements because of this lack of basic infrastructure, although they may have potential to accommodate schemes within the settlement boundaries. **All of these settlements may be suitable locations for a Rural Exceptions schemes where a local affordable housing need is identified.**
- The remaining settlements within the District of Blaby are very small villages or Hamlets with a population below 250 and with no or few facilities and services. **New housing and employment development of any scale would not normally be directed towards these settlements. Rural exceptions schemes may be appropriate where a demonstrable need is identified.**

12.4 This paper is concerned with setting out a range of 'options' on key spatial planning matters. The questions are therefore: whether a hierarchy is appropriate; whether the categories in the hierarchy are appropriate; and, whether the settlements identified are in the correct categories. More detailed questions concerning Stoney Stanton's status as a rural centre is addressed.

12.5 At this stage, it is not possible to ascribe a level of development to each of the settlements identified, this will be a matter for subsequent versions of the CS and the detailed allocations document. However, it is important that the Core Strategy gives sufficient steer to the Community and developers as to which settlements development should occur. The emerging RSS indicates that the higher order settlements will be more acceptable locations for the majority of additional development than the small and medium sized villages and hamlets.

12.6 The Alternative Options for Settlement hierarchy are set out below:

**Table 1.**

<b>PUA</b>	<b>Town / Hinckley Urban</b>	<b>Large villages</b>	<b>Rural Centres</b>	<b>Medium villages</b>	<b>Small villages</b>	<b>Very small villages/ Hamlets</b>
Glenfield Kirby Muxloe Leicester Forest East Braunstone Town Glen Parva	Blaby Earl Shilton*	Enderby Narborough & Littlethorpe Countesthorpe Whetstone	Stoney Stanton	Sapcote Croft Huncote Cosby	Elmes-thorpe Kilby Sharnford Thurlaston	Aston Flamville Leicester Forest West Potters Marston Wigston Parva

**Options:**

- **Not to adopt a settlement hierarchy**
- **To adopt the hierarchy as defined in Table 1 (above).**
- **To adopt a alternative hierarchy, in which the towns and villages identified should be higher or lower in the settlement hierarchy (Please give a justification)**
- **To consider Stoney Stanton as a Large or Medium village as opposed to a Rural Centre**
- **To identify what scale and type of development would be allowed in the various levels of the hierarchy.**

**13.0 Alternative Options for the Motorways Retail Area (MRA) and Retail development**

13.1 The largest and highest ranking centre in the District of Blaby is the Motorways Retail Area (including Fosse Park, Asda and Grove Farm Triangle). MRA is a large 'out of town' retail outlet with a sub-regional catchment. It comprises large shops occupied by national retailers. It is economically successful and provides a large number of jobs. Because of the scale of its retail offer, it has impacts on neighbouring centres both within and outside the District of Blaby. MRA's out of town location and situation in relation to the strategic road network entails that is heavily reliant on car-borne visitors.

13.2 The Council's Study and Town Centres Study (2008) has indicated that there is modest capacity for additional comparison goods floorspace in

the District up to 2026. The study recognises that additional growth of the MRA may result in a negative impact on existing centres. Significant growth of the MRA does not sit comfortably with Central Government policy contained in Planning Policy Statement 6 and does not appear to be in conformity with the emerging RSS which states that “Local Planning Authorities should prevent the development or expansion of additional regional scale out-of-town retail and leisure floorspace”.

13.3 At this stage the impacts of MRA growth have not been fully explored. Whilst Central Government and regional policy does not appear to support growth, the Council may not wish to restrict the potential of the MRA by preventing modest scale alterations where it can be demonstrated that the proposal would improve the retail offer without causing detrimental impacts on neighbouring centres.

13.4 Potential approaches to MRA growth were addressed at Issues and Options stage, including whether the MRA should become a designated town centre.

13.5 At present Blaby is the only ‘town centre’ within the District and continues to be the focus of retail growth, including planned improvements and expansion as part of a Town Centre Masterplan. The Masterplan, and the District of Blaby Retail Study (2008) have indicated that the town is not fulfilling its retail potential and its place in the retail hierarchy is threatened as other shopping centres grow and change. Given Blaby’s role as a town centre it is not proposed to offer options in terms of its place in the retail hierarchy. Limiting growth would be contrary to PPS6 which encourages growth to be focussed on town centres. The potential scale of development capable of being accommodated in the town centre is nonetheless constrained by the existing built form and availability of suitable land.

13.6 The Alternative Options for the Motorways Retail Area are set out below:

**Options:**

- **To allow the managed growth of the Motorways Retail Area where it can be demonstrated that there would be no significant adverse impacts on ‘town centres’ and where the sustainability of the area would be increased.**
- **To prevent any further expansion of the MRA**

**14.0 Alternative Options for Green Wedges**

14.1 The District of Blaby has several individual settlements which abut the Principal Urban Area of Leicester, and several others that are close to its boundaries. These settlements are physically separated from each other by a series of strategic gaps (Green Wedges) and are proud of their individuality.

14.2 The Council has, in previous Local Plans, been committed to protecting Green Wedges from inappropriate development. These areas were designated to: protect structurally important areas of open land; ensure that land extends out from the urban centres to preserve links with the countryside; to provide appropriate recreational facilities; and, promote the positive management so that they remain or are enhanced as attractive environmental features with good public access.

14.3 The emerging RSS and Sub-Regional Strategy (SRS) no longer contain an overarching policy for Green Wedges. The Council has objected to the proposed deletion of such a policy. Notwithstanding this, Planning Policy Statement 7 allows for "...carefully drafted, criteria based [designation] policies in Local Development Documents..." where these are based on evidence. The Green Wedge policy in the Blaby District Local Plan was allowed to be saved by the Secretary of State in September 2007 and continues to be part of the operative development plan for the District of Blaby until superseded.

14.4 The emerging RSS states that "A review of existing Green Wedges or the creation of new ones in association with development will be carried out through the LDF process". It is clear that in order to accommodate the challenging levels of development required in and around the PUA and larger villages beyond the PUA, that an assessment of the extent of current Green Wedges will be necessary.

14.5 The Alternative Options for Green Wedges are set out below:

**Options:**

- **To only allow housing and employment requirements to be accommodated outside of Green Wedges as currently defined.**
- **To review Green Wedges to ensure that development is only located in the least sensitive areas.**
- **Not to support 'Green Wedges' but ensure that development is located where it has best access to infrastructure and services, irrespective of the individual identity of settlements.**
- **To identify additional Green Wedges in association with new development.**

**15.0 Alternative Options for addressing Climate change**

15.1 The Climate Change supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1 states that " In developing their Core Strategy and supporting Local Development Documents, planning authorities should provide a framework that promotes and encourages renewable and low carbon

energy generation. Policies should be designed to promote and not restrict renewable and low-carbon energy and supporting infrastructure”.

15.2 The supplement also states that, as part of their development plans LPAs should:

- “ensure any local approach to protecting landscape and townscape is consistent with PPS22 and does not preclude the supply of any type of renewable energy other than in the most exceptional circumstances;
- alongside any criteria-based policy developed in line with PPS22, consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low-carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure the development of such sources, but in doing so take care to avoid stifling innovation including by rejecting proposals solely because they are outside areas identified for energy generation; and
- expect a proportion of the energy supply of new development to be secured from decentralised and renewable or low-carbon energy sources”.

15.3 The Council recognises the contribution it can make to reducing energy consumption and securing more renewable sources of energy. The planning system is one tool amongst many that can encourage such approaches.

15.4 Blaby District Council jointly commissioned consultants to consider the impacts of the emerging Core Strategy on climate change and opportunities for the LDF to positively address these.

15.5 The study examined: Renewable Energy Opportunities, including the potential for a number of sources of renewable energy (biomass and energy crops, wind turbines etc), and; Energy efficiency recommendations for new developments, including an assessment of the extent that it may be technically and economically possible to expect new buildings to reduce their carbon emissions through the use of micro-generating systems, solar gain, photovoltaic cells, bio-mass heating and combined heat and power schemes etc.

15.6 The Climate Change study for the District of Blaby only identified one site with the potential for significant renewable energy production. This was land west of Enderby north of the M69. Other forms of renewable sources of energy including hydro-power, biomass, and solar did not appear to offer the potential to generate more than 2MW of electricity (although there was significant scope for building integrated solutions to cumulatively deliver a significant supply).

15.7 The Alternative Options for Climate Change are set out below:

**Options:**

- **To identify the specific site for a wind energy generating facility identified in the climate change study.**
- **To set out a criteria based policy that seeks to guide the location of renewable energy sites.**
- **To set out a specific location and a criteria based policy.**

15.8 Some measures that govern energy efficiency are governed by legislation contained within Part L of the Building Regulations. The Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) is a key tool for improving the energy performance of dwellings which is intended to be used alongside the Building Regulations. CSH introduces a phased approach to the improvement of the energy efficiency of new homes resulting in new homes being 'zero carbon' by 2016. In addition, there are voluntary codes (such as BREEAM) that encourage developers to produce energy efficient products.

15.9 The options to be considered are whether or not the Council should seek to pursue earlier delivery of the CSH than the nationally agreed milestones. Any such decision should balance the desire to seek improvements in the energy efficiency of new homes with the impact on economic viability that these staged improvements entail.

**Options:**

- **To introduce earlier delivery of CSH phases than the nationally agreed milestones.**
- **To seek improvements in energy efficiency in accordance with the agreed phasing approach for CSH.**

**16.0 Other key issues**

16.1 The Alternative Options considered above relate to matters central to the delivery of the Core Strategy. Other key issues that will form a central part of the Strategy are Green Infrastructure, Transport and Infrastructure provision. Evidence continues to be gathered on these fundamental components of spatial planning.

**16.2 Green Infrastructure (GI)**

16.3 Green Infrastructure is "a network of multi-functional green-spaces that contribute to the high quality natural and built environment". GI encompasses a wide variety of 'green' space areas including Green

Wedges, formal sports pitches and play areas, footpaths and cycle routes that link green-spaces, and open countryside (amongst others).

16.4 A wide range of evidence is being gathered to inform the quantitative and qualitative requirements for GI. A Landscape Character Assessment has been completed and 'An Open Space, Sport and Recreation facilities assessment and audit' is nearing completion. In addition, the GI potential of the Green Wedges has been considered as part of the 'Stepping Stones' initiative.

16.5 Green Infrastructure is central to the delivery of Sustainable Communities. New developments (particularly the SUEs) should incorporate GI in the early stages of development to ensure that opportunities to maximise 'Green linkages' are not lost. A desirable outcome of the development of a SUE would be to achieve a series of links from the urban area to the Countryside, and from the SUE to the key services and facilities within Leicester City Centre and other areas which contain important services and facilities.

16.6 The landscape of Blaby District has potential to provide a structure for both formal and informal GI, for example through the potential to exploit the floodplains of the Soar and Sence valleys and networks of footpaths and cycleways using the Grand Union Canal and the many disused railway lines that cross the District. In addition, GI can encourage improvements to the bio-diversity of the District by providing new habitats, and protecting important existing habitats and species.

16.7 Opportunities to incorporate key landscape features such as woodland, pools, rivers and streams and the local topography should be used to create high quality design incorporating a wide range of high quality, functional and useful open spaces and links. GI should always be of high quality. It is important that the subsequent maintenance of GI is considered at the earliest opportunities and that the body and resources responsible for any long term maintenance liabilities are identified.

#### 16.8 Transport

16.9 Effective transportation is central to the delivery of an effective spatial plan. The RSS Panel recognised this and, in the context of encouraging 'Urban concentration' stated that "without substantial development of urban public transport....the effect of concentration will be only to worsen existing congestion to an intolerable degree". Given that much of the focus of development in the District of Blaby is proposed to consolidate 'Urban concentration' both in and adjoining the PUA and in those settlements with a strong functional relationship with the PUA, it is important that appropriate transport studies be undertaken.

16.10 Adverse environmental implications resulting from current traffic levels (particularly private cars), include congestion, poor air quality and car dominated streets. The CS must address these issues by encouraging

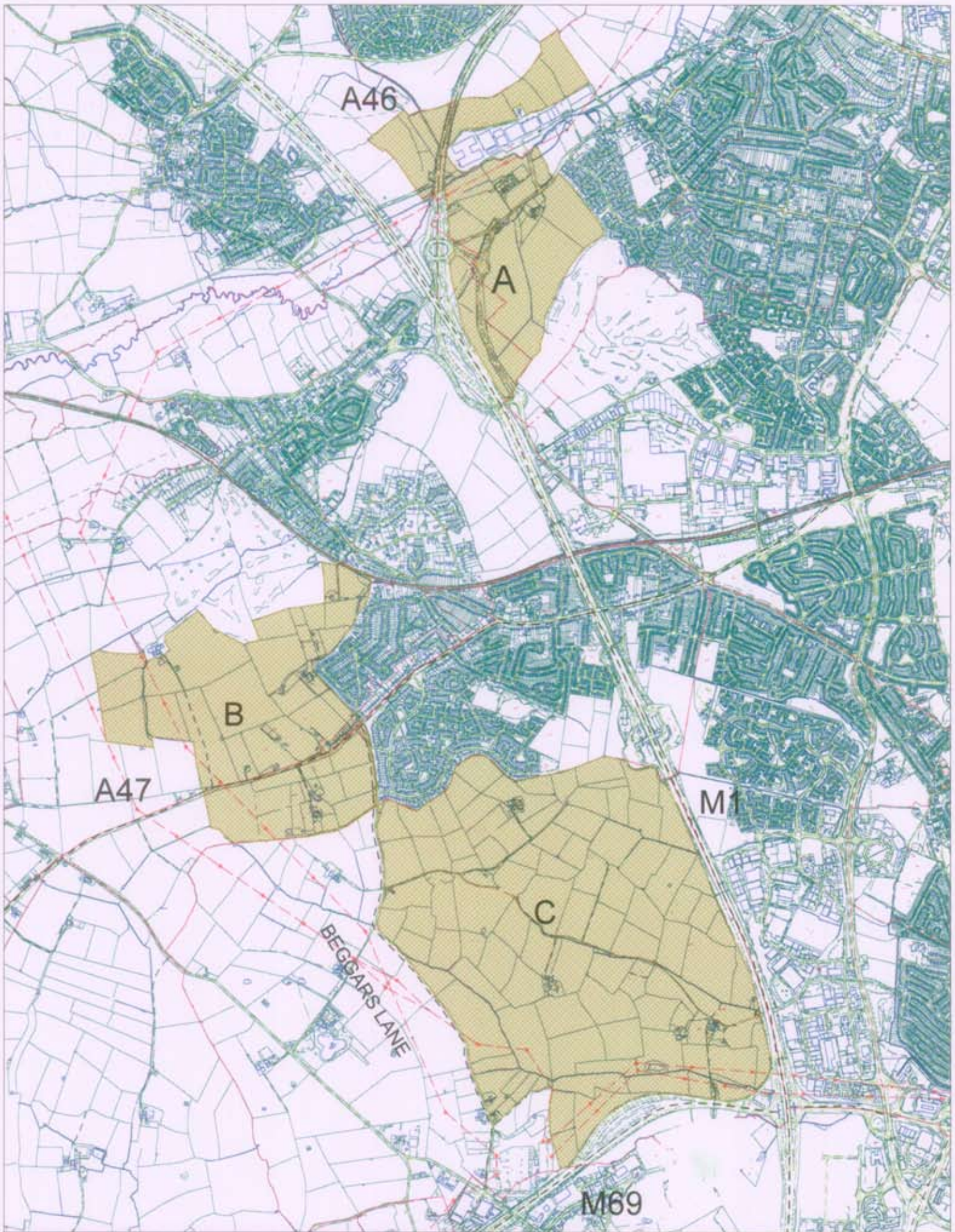
more 'sustainable' forms of transport to access facilities and services, particularly for those without their own transport.

- 16.11 The CS can make a contribution to reducing the need to travel through the location of new development (where services, facilities and places of employment are located close to people's homes), thus encouraging walking and cycling. It is however recognised that the economy and society of the District is still reliant on the private motor vehicle and this has to be accommodated in the most environmentally sensitive manner.
- 16.12 Car dominance is unlikely to disappear in the short term and the Spatial Planning of the District must allow for its continued use, whilst introducing measures that make alternatives more desirable. This is particularly important in the SUE. Central Leicester is likely to attract new residents of the SUE for work and leisure opportunities. Evidence suggests that the limited routes between Leicester and the west are already heavily congested at peak times. The development of a SUE must be accompanied by a series of transport measures that will avoid the 'intolerable' transport situation envisaged by the RSS Panel. Work will continue to examine the transport implications of the potential options for SUEs and SESs. The Central Leicestershire Transport Model will be used to assess these implications.
- 16.13 It is important that the links between spatial planning and transportation remain strong and that the CS supports, and is consistent with the Leicestershire and Leicester Local Transport Plan and the Regional Transport Strategy.
- 16.14 The District of Blaby has one operating train station for passengers (Narborough). Additional train stations within the District on the National Forest (Ivanhoe) line at Kirby Muxloe and the Leicester to Birmingham line at Blaby would introduce an effective alternative to car use and should be encouraged by negotiating with key stakeholders.
- 16.15 Workplace charging levies and congestion charging are approaches which are supported in the Proposed Changes to the RSS. Blaby District Council will continue to work with Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council to discuss these and other cross boundary transportation measures that seek to promote modal shift.
- 16.16 Provision of infrastructure
- 16.17 An effective spatial strategy for the District of Blaby cannot be delivered without adequate provision of infrastructure. New development cannot be considered 'sustainable' without appropriate provision for education, health, play and open space, community facilities and transport links. In addition new development should be capable of being satisfactorily drained, and have basic utilities as well as availability of emergency and other crucial services.

- 16.18 It is important to establish, through the Core Strategy, that new development can make adequate provision for these infrastructure needs of new residents and employees, and will not have an adverse effect on the capacity of existing infrastructure.
- 16.19 Planning Policy Statement 12 requires that Core Strategies show how the strategy for the area will be delivered and by whom. The provision of such infrastructure is a key component of this delivery. Infrastructure will be delivered both by the public and private sectors. The Private sector will deliver infrastructure through various 'Capital projects', and also through financial contributions (generally sought through section 106 obligations). However, it is envisaged that the emergence of a Community Infrastructure Levy will introduce a more structured approach to contributions.

## APPENDIX A

### LOCATIONS OF ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE URBAN EXTENSION(S)



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**Alternative SUE Locations**

Date :- 03 November 2008

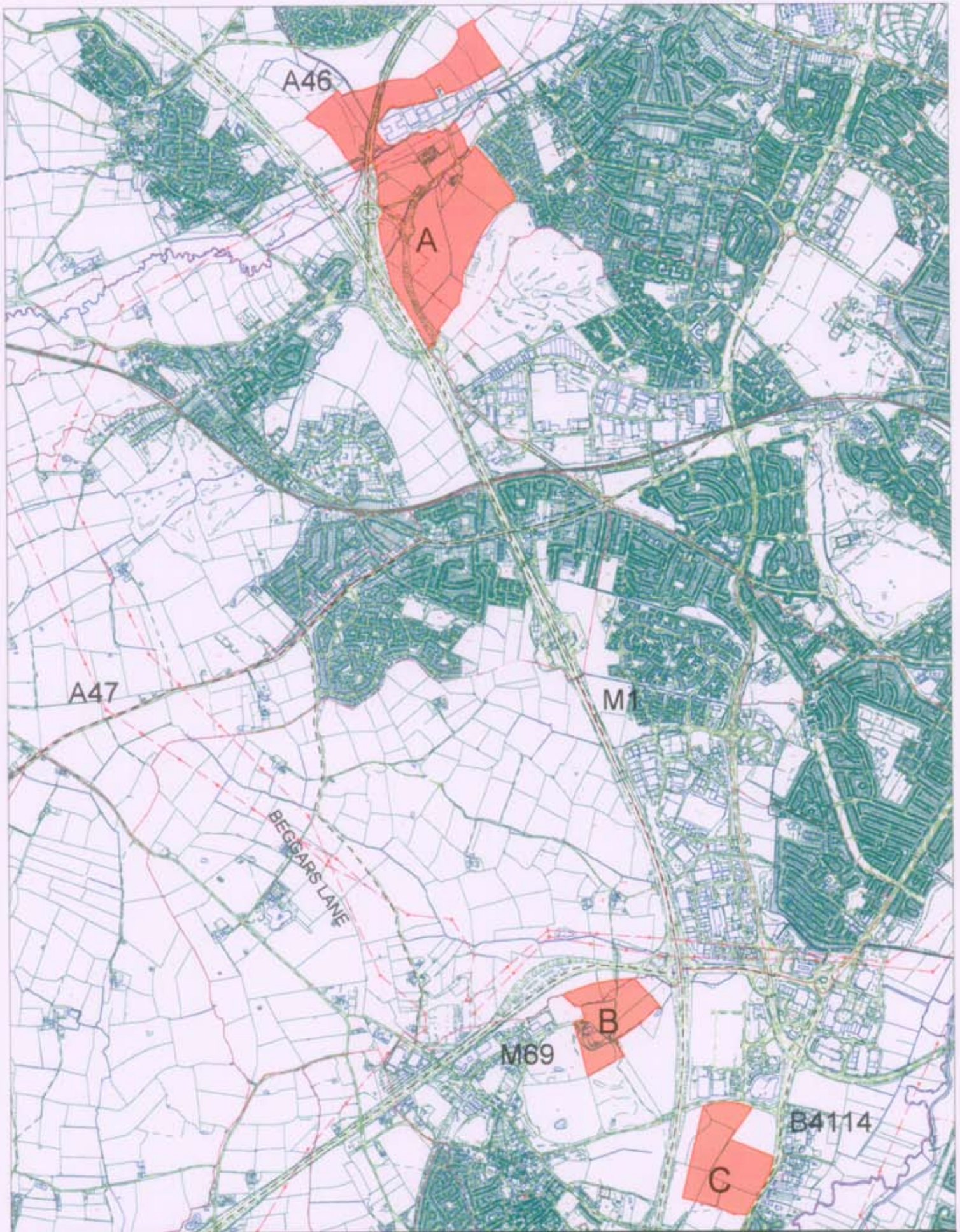
O. S. Map Ref. :- SK5203

Scale :- 1:26500



## APPENDIX B

# LOCATIONS OF ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS FOR STRATEGIC EMPLOYMENT SITES



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Alternative SES Locations

Date :- 03 November 2008

O. S. Map Ref. :- SK5302  
 Scale :- 1:30000



APPENDIX C  
THE PRINCIPAL URBAN AREA



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PUA 

Date :- 01 October 2008

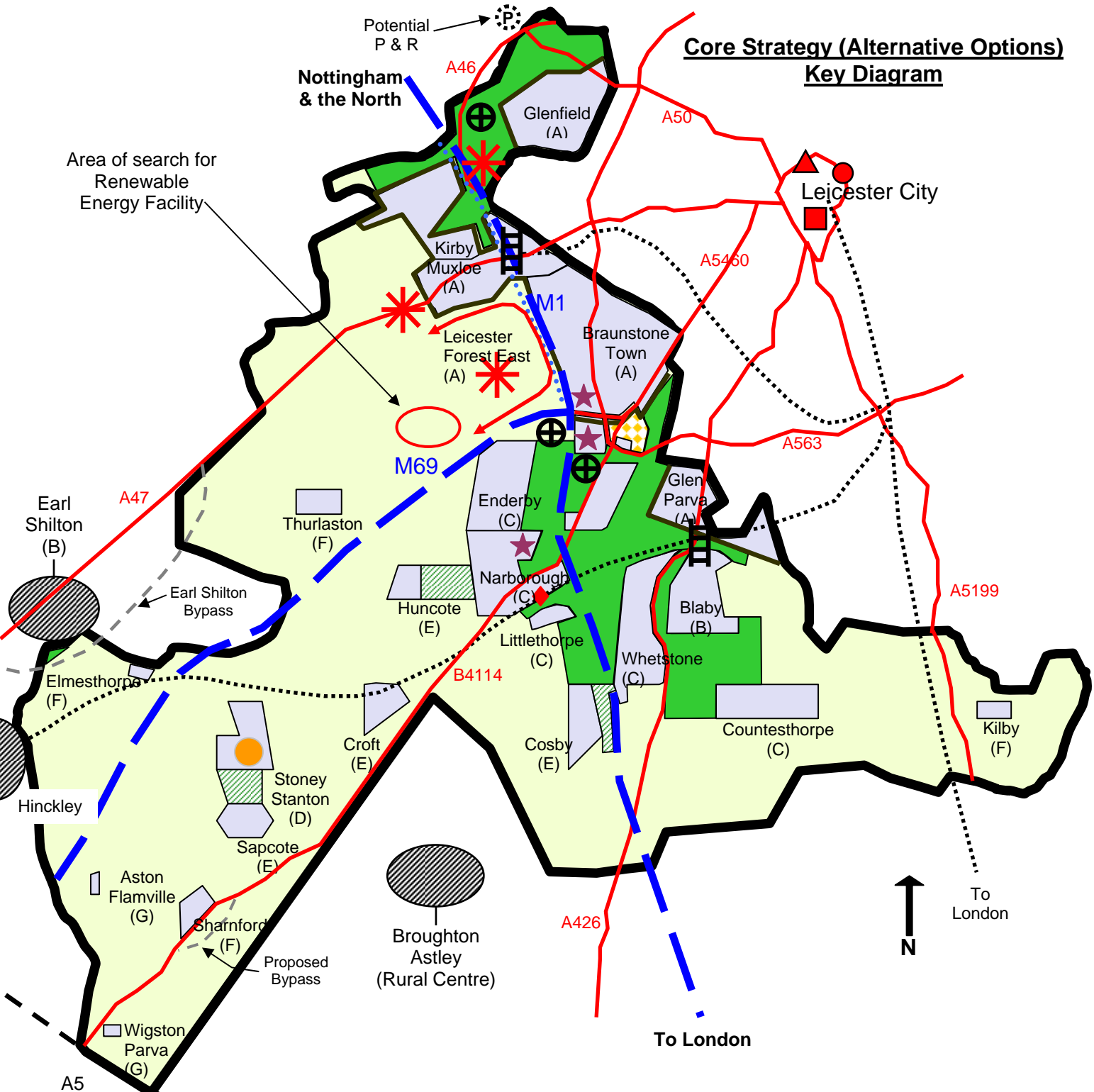
O. S. Map Ref. :- SK5402

Scale :- 1:40000



APPENDIX D  
KEY DIAGRAM

**Core Strategy (Alternative Options)  
Key Diagram**



- High level Leisure opportunities
- ▲ High level retail centre
- High level office centre
- Town/Village (Settlement Hierarchy)
- Rural Centre (Stoney Stanton)
- ★ High Quality Employment Areas
- Existing Areas of Separation
- Countryside
- ✱ Potential SUE(s)
- ⊕ Potential SES(s)
- Existing Green Wedges

Key

- Leicestershire and Leicester Urban Area / Principal Urban Area of Leicester
- Motorways Retail Area
- ..... Potential M1 Improvement (J21 – 30)  
J21 M1 / M69 Improvement
- Motorway
- By Pass
- Railway Line
- ◆ Narborough Train Station
- Potential Train station (Blaby & Kirby Muxloe)
- ↻ Potential site for New Green Wedge